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ABSTRACT

Approaches to decentralization of public vocational education and training in New Zealand, New South Wales (NSW), and Victoria (Australia) were compared. The national training reform agenda and establishment of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) provided the national context for and influenced the direction of developments within NSW and Victoria. New Zealand's policy approaches were broadly similar in thrust and direction. In each jurisdiction, decentralization of management of inputs into public vocational education and training was combined with new forms of accountability. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in NSW and Victoria had substantial networking arrangements for curriculum development. In New Zealand, curriculum development was fully devolved to the institutional level but had fewer resources compared with Australia. New Zealand, NSW, and Victoria had three different approaches to the structural forms of decentralization. New Zealand's Equivalent Full-Time Student funding system was a market-based bureaucratic mechanism that created incentives for polytechnics to attract students. Funding for TAFE in Australia was coordinated by ANTA and channeled through state and territory bodies. Both countries experienced quality differences due to market-determined prices. Decentralization contributed to responsiveness to the labor market. NSW's approach--organized structural changes--appeared most adaptable. (Appendixes include notes on Australia's vocational education and training system. Contains 57 references. (YLB)

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Training

Decentralization of public vocational training in New Zealand and two Australian states

by David Lundberg

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by David Lundberg

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This study is one of several prepared in the framework of research undertaken by the ILO's Training Policy Branch on the subject of national experiences in attempting to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of public training systems. The research has focused in particular on the decentralization of training as a means of enhancing flexibility and responsiveness to local labour market conditions.

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I. Introduction

A. Scope of the study

This paper is a brief comparative study of the approaches to decentralization of public vocational education and training in New Zealand, New South Wales and Victoria. The public vocational education and training in question are provided by Polytechnics in New Zealand. They are provided by Institutes of Technology or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in New South Wales (NSW) and by TAFE Colleges in Victoria.

The approach taken overviews decentralization tendencies in vocational education and training in Australia and New Zealand, before outlining the Australian federal policy and administrative context within which the differences between NSW and Victoria have evolved. Decentralization policies and structural changes in NSW, Victoria and New Zealand are then outlined separately and contextually, before being compared in relation to a number of policy issues.

Recent decentralization initiatives in Australia and New Zealand have relied (to varying degrees) on market-based measures to stimulate improved performance by vocational education and training institutions, and further developments in this direction seem to be in prospect. The variations between the three jurisdictions under comparison, in terms of how market measures are being employed, is particularly interesting. The market approach is associated with decentralization of controls over **inputs** into vocational education and training to local institutional managers, greatly reducing traditional central office bureaucratic controls. However, in both countries this approach coexists with the development of new forms of accountability that focus on the **outcomes** of vocational education and training. These new forms of accountability are, paradoxically, re-inforcing certain centralizing tendencies.

The three jurisdictions discussed in this paper demonstrate three approaches to decentralization of public training that are similar in their fundamental direction but fascinatingly different in significant respects.

B. The three cases

The three jurisdictions and types of institutions selected for this study are interesting to compare for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the cultural traditions of the three former British settler colonies are fundamentally similar, with interesting variations in details and minority influences. Australia and New Zealand have shared a tradition of substantial state intervention in the economy, particularly in industrial relations, industry protection and social security. Both have egalitarian social traditions that overlay and moderate real class differences. Both introduced basic welfare measures early this century. In 1893, New Zealand was the first nation to grant women the right to vote, and Australia followed in 1902, in the first *Electoral Act* of the new federal Commonwealth. Both have entrenched national traditions of liberal democracy, and social and political stability.

Secondly, Australia's federal and New Zealand's unitary constitutional structures exert different influences. The populations of NSW and Victoria are only a little larger than New Zealand's. New Zealand participated in the 1890s constitutional conventions that led in 1901 to the federal Commonwealth of Australia, but New Zealand opted to remain separate from the six uniting Australian states and developed as an independent nation.

Within NSW and Victoria, the state administrations operate in a manner that is similar to unitary nation states, but the overlay of Australian federal policy is a significant factor.

Thirdly, in terms of public vocational education and training, New Zealand and NSW have had more highly centralized systems than Victoria's, but New Zealand's has changed radically, through deliberate decentralization. NSW is changing into a less centralized system, but the process of change is more regulated than that occurring in New Zealand.

Fourthly, industrial relations are an important influence on the operation of public vocational education and training systems. Australia and New Zealand have had public conciliation and arbitration systems for much of their history, but in the last few years - under social democratic Labour and conservative National governments - New Zealand has abandoned this system of collective bargaining. The social democratic Australian Labor Party (ALP) national government (in power for over a decade) favours Australia developing enterprise-based collective bargaining, but with minimum standards being set by arbitration awards. Under a recently elected conservative coalition (of Liberal and National parties) government, Victoria favours pursuing more rapid and radical industrial relations reform, following a pattern of change similar to New Zealand's. This has led to federal-state tensions, and efforts by the federal Government to restrict the impact of the Victorian approach. The longer established conservative coalition government in New South Wales favours a more gradualist approach to an enterprise-based collective bargaining system.

The nature of industrial relations in Australia and New Zealand has affected what is to be taught and how. Industrial awards, issued by conciliation and arbitration authorities, have regulated the occupational wages and conditions of a substantial part of the workforce, with the force of Commonwealth, state or territory laws or ordinances. Apprenticeships, traineeships and other training arrangements have been linked to the structures embodied in these awards. In some cases, training arrangements are directly regulated within industrial awards.

Industrial relations have also affected teachers and their relationship to vocational education and training because most teachers at kindergarten, school, TAFE and university levels in public and private authorities have been employed under the industrial awards system.

Australia's national system of competency-based training (which will be described below) was conceptually consistent with the centralized system of conciliation and arbitration. The change to enterprise bargaining in Australia may require further modifications to the system of competency-based training, but if that occurs a key element in the outcomes-oriented accountability of vocational education and training may be weakened. However, that is not necessarily the case. New Zealand has embraced labour market reform in a more far reaching manner than Australia, while developing a more comprehensive approach to standards based learning than that in Australia.

II. The heritage: the development of technical education in Australia and New Zealand

Australian historians generally accord to the Ballarat School of Mines, which was established in 1871, the honour of being Australia's first technical college. By 1900, technical colleges or mechanics institutes had been established in all of Australia's major cities. These technical colleges or mechanics institutes were originally local community-based bodies in which the nineteenth century colonial and twentieth century state governments were rather slow to take an interest. Despite this, technical colleges played an important role in the education of the Australian workforce, and several of them have spawned universities. NSW and Victoria differed in their colonial-era policies. Victoria had a decentralized mixed system, consisting partly of colleges under the state education department and partly of the semi-autonomous Victorian Institute Colleges (see p. 16?). NSW, on the other hand, had a relatively centralized approach to development of a state-wide system.

New Zealand's first technical college was established in Wellington in 1886. Technical colleges evolved into institutes in a similar manner to that in Australia, but the development of community colleges was also an important element in the system.

The development of vocational education institutions in both Australia and New Zealand seems to have been influenced by developments in tertiary education in the United Kingdom (Selby-Smith, 1971). The United Kingdom was most obviously influential in New Zealand, where the term "polytechnic" was adopted for colleges with a broad spectrum of responsibilities that encompassed what in Australia became complementary Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Colleges and Colleges of Advanced Education.

In Australia, the 1964 Martin Report recommended the establishment of a Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC), and also proposed the establishment of an Institute of Colleges in each state to oversee technical colleges which, it envisaged, might extend their scope to the award of "practical" vocational degrees (ie. degrees in disciplines such as teaching, nursing, computing science, etc.). The Commonwealth responses to the Martin Committee was to promote the development of Colleges of Advanced Education' (CAEs), based on teachers' colleges and the higher education elements of well established technical colleges, as a separate tier of institutions. These CAEs generally did not (some Victorian institutions being notable exceptions) provide TAFE-style courses, but primarily delivered practically oriented diploma courses.

The 1974 Kangan report initiated a major change in the status of TAFE-style courses, which had until then attracted little sustained policy attention from federal governments. The Kangan report defined TAFE as a part of tertiary education responsible for a range of post compulsory vocational, remedial and personal enrichment education programmes. A TAFE Commission was established after the Kangan report, following the model of Commissions responsible for advising the federal government on funding for Universities, Colleges of Advanced Education and schools. Federal funding for TAFE increased substantially. The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) recommended by the Martin Committee was subsequently established, with separate Councils for Universities, Colleges of Advanced Education and TAFE Colleges.

In the 1980s, after a federal White Paper on higher education, the binary system of

higher education (colleges of advanced education and universities) gave way to a "unified national system" of higher education into which colleges of advanced education were integrated. The number of higher education institutions has been reduced by amalgamations: former colleges of advanced education have been absorbed by universities, or universities have been created from a cluster of colleges of advanced education. Three private universities have emerged for the first time. Both the established and the new universities retain substantial autonomy, within institutional profiles negotiated with federal funding bodies.

In both Australia and New Zealand, state and (Australian) Catholic system schools and vocational education and training institutions have developed in a context of rigid controls over staffing levels, expenditure on salaries, buildings, equipment and other inputs. Even universities tended to be subjected to similar bureaucratic controls, albeit more often through the influence exerted by university administrators in relation to resource allocation to particular schools, faculties and disciplines.

Rigid administrative controls restricted adaptability. The professional socialization of public school and TAFE teachers also tended to encourage conformist acceptance of "the system". At the same time, the culture of educational professionals tended to place a low value on broader social accountability for educational outcomes, as measured, for example, by the public examination systems.

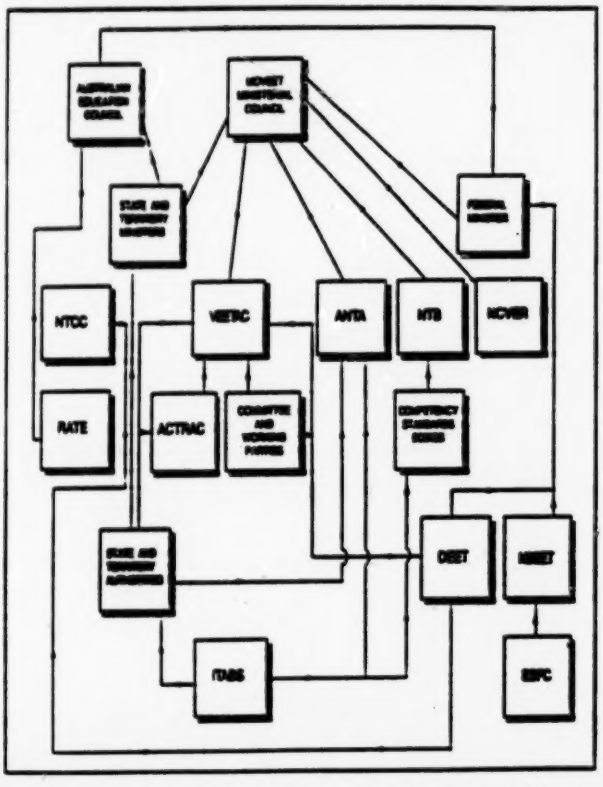
Nevertheless, the centralized public school systems that developed in Australia and New Zealand delivered a relatively equitable standard of educational services compared with countries with systems which have a high degree of dependence on local funding sources. The capacity to deploy staff around large systems has reduced geographic inequity of standards. Special services can be delivered more easily within larger systems. Local political pressures are tempered. A broad merit-based career structure can be provided for staff. Mobile populations can be readily accommodated. (Jecks, 1971). These and other benefits of a centralized system were appealing to the egalitarian cultures that have characterized Australia and New Zealand, and they were largely followed in the NSW and New Zealand approaches to TAFE and Polytechnics, until recent decentralization reforms. In Victoria, however, a more decentralized model had been followed for some time.

III. The Australian federal context

The NSW and Victorian systems cannot be considered realistically in abstraction from their Australian federal context. Forty years ago that would have been an almost absurd proposition, because the federal government then played a negligible, and very indirect, role in vocational education and training, which were seen as a state government responsibility, insofar as it was a government responsibility at all. Since the Kangan Report, however, federal involvement in vocational education has grown steadily, especially since the development of a training agenda under the federal Labor governments which have ruled since 1983. This agenda has been based on a consensual, cooperative federalism approach involving extensive committee and negotiating arrangements to make progress.

Figure 1 indicates the complexity of the Australian federal system of governance of vocational education and training, although in 1993 several of these bodies are themselves undergoing in a process of change, the outcomes of which are not yet finally determined. (Many of the bodies depicted in Figure 1 are described in context below, and Annex 1 provides further explanatory notes for reference). Networks have developed across Australia to plan and promote more national consistency in vocational education and training arrangements. The establishment of the Australian National Training Authority, is seen by some as an example of centralism, and by others as cooperative federalism in vocational education.

Figure 1. Australia's Vocational Education and Training System



Source: David Lundberg, "User's sytem guide", *Australian Training Review*, (5) December 1992-January 1993, pp. 29-31

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A. Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)

The federal-state-territory cooperation that has characterized the development of the training reform agenda has been manifested in the agreement to establish the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). ANTA has been established on an interim basis to implement an agreement which comes into effect on 1 January 1994. ANTA will be run by a five-person Board consisting of industry and community representatives and will report to the MOVEET/Ministerial Council. Its mission is to achieve national consistency in the delivery of vocational education through the development of agreed "national goals, objectives and priorities", "national strategic plans", "firm targets and priorities", co-ordinated funding arrangements, and "profiles" for vocational education and training at national level. State and Territory authorities will advise ANTA on State and Territory "profiles".

Industry will participate through membership of ANTA and through the national, state and territory network of industry training advisory bodies (ITABs). National ITABs will advise ANTA on national "profiles", and State and Territory ITABs will advise State and Territory authorities on their profiles. "Profiles" are defined in terms of corporate strategies which indicate the intended objectives, roles, targets, specializations and areas of excellence which the institution intends to pursue. These 'key planning instruments' will be considered and adopted by the Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers in the Ministerial Council, giving ANTA a central role in the national system.

B. The Australian training reform agenda

Australia has developed a national strategy for reforming vocational education and training, called the Australian "training reform agenda". The Australian "training reform agenda" refers to a package of reforms in vocational education which was agreed by Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers with relevant responsibilities, a process which began with two special conferences in April 1989 and November 1990. Much of it has had broad support from employer and employee interest bodies in industry. The training reform agenda is, in that sense, a broadly agreed national policy agenda, not just a federal government one.

The Australian training reform agenda has five main themes:

(i) competency-based training, with national competency standards;

(ii) national recognition of competencies, however attained;

(iii) an open national training market;

(iv) equitable access to vocational education and training, and;

(v) an integrated entry-level training system.

Each of these five themes is briefly summarized below:

(i) Competency-based training

Competency-based training places the emphasis on what learners can do (outcomes), not what courses they have taken (inputs). Competency-based training is a form of standards based learning because assessment is measured against objective standards, not norm referenced against what other students have done. It provides scope for alternative paths to training delivery and to self-paced learning. It provides a strong framework for recognition of prior learning, whether formal or informal, and whether undertaken in Australia or elsewhere.

National vocational competency standards for Australia are being developed by Competency Standards Bodies, which are broadly representative of an industry or, in some cases, an occupational grouping that cuts across a number of industries. National vocational competency standards are promulgated by the National Training Board (NTB), which operates as a commercial company owned by Common-

wealth, state and territory ministers. The NTB company Board is broadly representative of industry as well as Commonwealth, state and territory educational bureaucracies. National vocational competency standards are related to the eight-level Australian Standards Framework (NTB, 1992). Commonwealth, state and territory ministers for vocational education have agreed that vocational education will be conducted on a nationally consistent basis to prepare people to meet national competence standards adopted by the NTB, (See Figure 2, p. 8). The Australian Committee on Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) and other state and territory bodies are proceeding with the development of vocational education curricula in competency-based mode.

In addition to the NTB-defined vocational competencies, the Finn and Mayer Committees have proposed and partially developed a set of generic "key competencies" which are, in effect, necessary life skills, although the official justification is that they are employment-related and a necessary underpinning for vocational competencies. Table 1 compares these key competences' with New Zealand's "essential skills", which are discussed later in the paper.

Table 1. Australia's 'key competencies' and New Zealand's 'essential skills'

Key Competencies	New Zealand Essential Skills
• Collecting, analysing and organizing information	• Information skills
• Communicating ideas and information	• Communication skills
• Planning and organizing activities	• Self-management skills • Work and study skills
• Working with others and in teams	• Social skills • Work and study skills
• Using mathematical ideas and techniques	• Numeracy skills
• Solving problems	• Problem-solving and decision-making skills
• Using technology	• Information skills • Communication skills

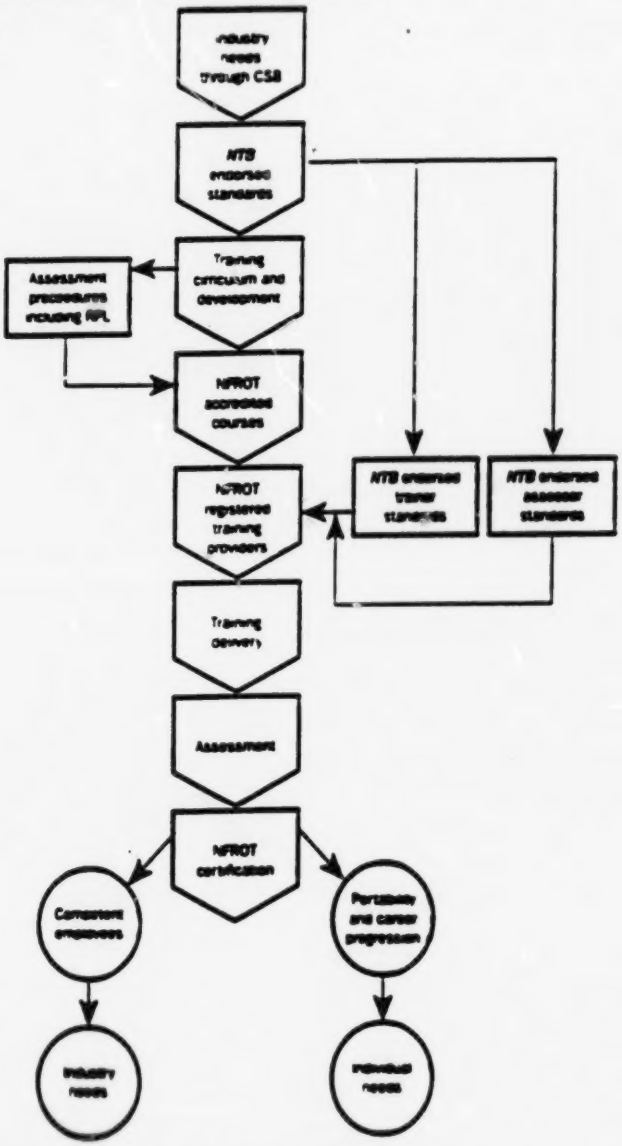
Note: Where the New Zealand essential skills are comparable with more than one key competency they have been repeated.

Source: Australian Education Council /Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training, report of the committee too advise on employment-related key competencies for post-compulsory education and training (Chair: E. Mayer), *Putting general education to work: the key competencies report,* AEC/MOVEET, Melbourne, September 1992 (Mayer report).

Assessment of competency-based training is still not a well-developed area of public policy in Australia, because of the complexities of the relationships between work-based and institutional assessments, the training of assessors, and acceptable forms of recording of assessments. Governments have agreed that in principle assessment in vocational education will be competency-based, and assessment will measure whether competencies have been attained, using flexible but valid and reliable measures which make provision for recognition of prior learning. Relevant competency standards for trainers and assessors have been defined.

Staff training in competency-based method: has been slow to develop, but requirements for TAFE staff have been defined and major investments in school and TAFE teacher in-service training and trainer training appear to be forthcoming.

Figure 2. Competency-based training in Australia



Source: National Training Board (NTB), Policy and Guidelines, p.12.

(ii) National recognition of competence

Ministers agreed in November 1990 to adopt a national approach to the recognition of competencies, however they were acquired, and in March 1992 they adopted a National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) which came into effect on 1 August 1992.

The framework includes nationally agreed principles and processes covering recognition of prior learning; articulation and credit transfer; accreditation of courses; registration of private providers; and assessment and mutual recognition of qualifications. It is intended that state and territory recognition procedures in areas covered by NFROT will correspond with NFROT's guiding principles, including mutual recognition by each state and territory of decisions taken by other state and territory authorities with responsibility for the recognition of qualifications.

The agreement on such a framework between nine governments was a major achieve-

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ment in Australian intergovernmental re- lations. It is a structure within which it is hoped that closer cooperation will develop, but the changes involved will not be fully implemented for several years. The Chairman of ANTA recently expressed concern that the implementation of NFROT had thus far proved to be too complex. Nevertheless, work is continuing, including work on development of a nationally consistent set of vocational education qualifications to be awarded within NFROT. New Zealand has also expressed interest in participating in the framework.

NFROT is a very desirable underpinning for the open training market, because the provisions for articulation and credit transfer, accreditation of courses and registration of private providers offer an appropriate context for more effective competition between public training institutions and private providers.

(iii) An open national training market

When the November 1990 Special Ministerial Conference decided to promote the development of a more open national training market, the implications of that decision were not clearly spelt out. The essence of the proposition, however, is the development of a more competitive market for education and training services. The open training market policy was a response to the perceived need for a more industry-responsive approach on the part of TAFE, and the assumption by the private sector of a greater role in training.

The Training Guarantee system was introduced to encourage the development of a training culture in industry, requiring firms with a payroll in excess of $A220,000 per year to indicate to the Australian Tax Office that they have spent at least the equivalent of 1.5 percent of the value of their payroll on training staff. This seems to have increased private sector training activity, and the "levy" has been virtually revenue neutral (raising only $5 million in its first year).

The development of a training market can be seen as being consistent with an international pattern in many advanced industrial societies of using non-bureaucratic mechanisms for achieving public policy objectives. It provides the context within which decentralization of control over inputs to vocational education is occurring.

(iv) Equitable access to vocational education and training

Achieving equitable access to vocational education and training is a significant problem in Australia, not least because training arrangements have evolved to serve the needs of one of the most gender-segmented labour markets amongst OECD countries. Students with disabilities or from non-English speaking or Aboriginal backgrounds may require remedial measures or special forms of assistance, which make students with these characteristics more expensive to teach. Colleges will also tend to try to attract students who will learn readily and reflect well on the image of their institution.

If vocational education and training institutions, including TAFE colleges, are to be surrounded by incentives to operate in an increasingly market-oriented fashion, equity of access may deteriorate under a more open training market, unless governments impose regulatory minimum quota arrangements to require access for disadvantaged students, or use some form of direct subsidy (possibly including high value vouchers) or tenders for services to disadvantaged students. There is, therefore, some tension between the open market and fair access themes of the training reform agenda.

(v) An integrated entry-level training system

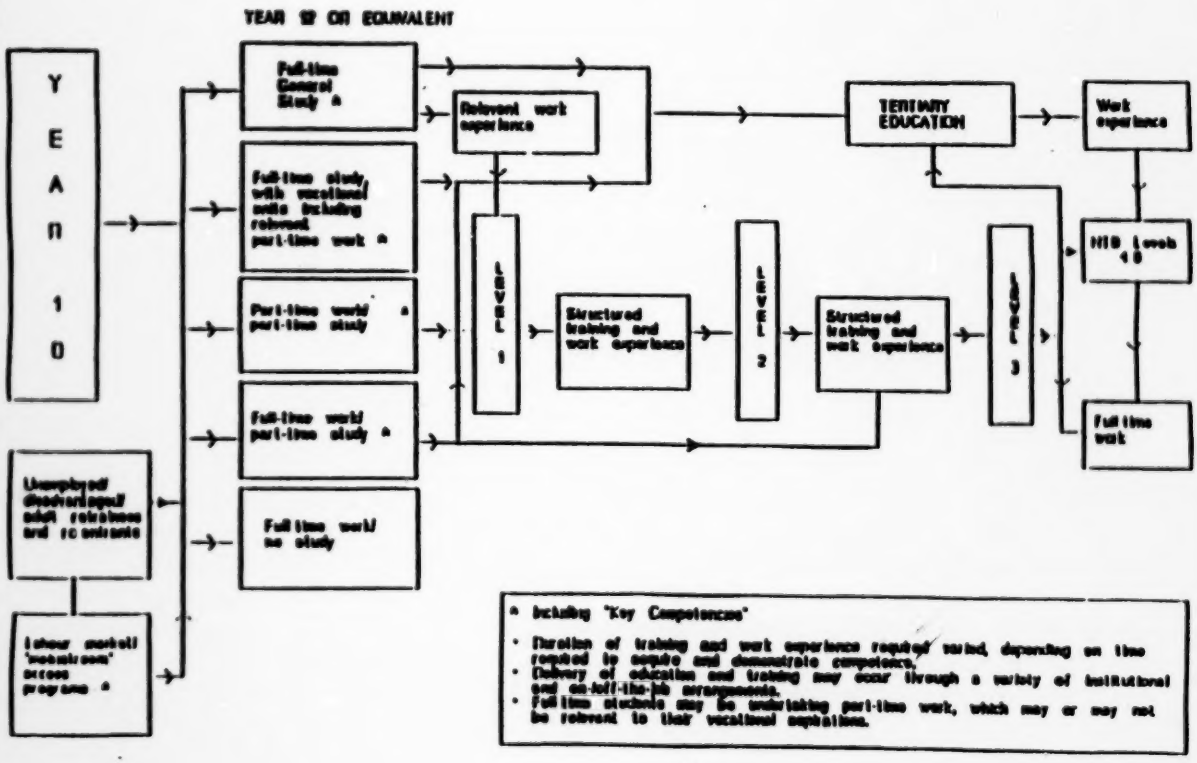
The development of a unified national entry-level training system was agreed in principle by ministers in November 1990. The Finn Report (*Young people's participation in post-compulsory education and training*) recommended ambitious targets for higher levels of participation and attainment by young Australians by 2001. Consultations about entry-level training were undertaken in all

states and territories by the Employment and Skills Formation Council, (ESFC) and resulted in the Carmichael report, proposing *The Australian vocational certificate training system.*

The Carmichael report integrated all of the themes of the training reform agenda and the main findings of the Finn Report as a basis for far-reaching proposals for reform of vocational education and training in Australia. The ESFC modified the targets specified in the Finn Report for 2001 to 60 percent of young people attaining an Australian Standards Framework level three (the equivalent of a current trade certificate) or higher qualification (including degrees or diplomas), and 90 percent attaining a nationally recognized ASF level two or higher qualification. At present, about half of Australia's young people have no nationally recognized post-school qualification, although many of them do receive various forms of training.

To achieve these targets, the ESFC's report proposed the *Australian vocational certificate training system.* The AVC system will be an integrated entry-level training system which would deliver competency-based training in both vocational and generic or "key" competencies through a variety of pathways, on a scale that would meet the modified Finn targets. The report suggested several pathways from Year 10, (see Figure 3). The report made supporting recommendations about delivery arrangements, training incomes, equity of access, employer subsidies, and an increased scale of support for vocational education.

Figure 3. Pathways in the Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC) System


YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT
Y E A R 1 0
Full-time General Study *
Relevant work experience
Full-time study with vocational units including relevant part-time work *
Part-time work * part-time study
Full-time work/ part-time study *
Full-time work/ no study
Unemployed disadvantaged adult retrainees and re-entrants
Labour market/ 'mainstream' access programs *
LEVEL 1
Structured training and work experience
LEVEL 2
Structured training and work experience
LEVEL 3
TERTIARY EDUCATION
Work experience
HSC Level 4/5
Full time work
* Including 'Key Competences'
• Duration of training and work experience required varied, depending on time required to acquire and demonstrate competence.
• Delivery of education and training may occur through a variety of institutional and on-/off-the-job arrangements.
• Full time students may be undertaking part-time work, which may or may not be relevant to their vocational aspirations.

Source: ESFC/Carmichael Report, Figure 4-1.

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After further consultations, the ESFC's recommendations were in large measure approved by the Australian Education Council and Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training in June 1992. The proposed AVC system is now the subject of extensive pilot-testing in workplaces, schools and TAFE, before it is implemented on a full-scale basis throughout Australia from January 1995.

The national training reform agenda and the establishment of ANTA provide the national context for developments within New South Wales and Victoria and exert a significant influence on the direction of these developments.

IV. Decentralization in vocational education and training in Australia and New Zealand

Moves towards decentralization have been developing strongly in the last five years in both countries. The development of decentralization measures in Australia and New Zealand has not, however, been a simple one way process.

There is a strong underlying trend towards decentralization of controls over inputs into vocational education and training, in favour of decentralized management of systems and greater discretion at managerial levels within institutions about how to organize delivery of vocational education and training. There is less detailed control from central authorities over specific funding, staffing, resourcing, curricula, and related inputs, in favour of more local managerial discretion. This is generally associated with a greater reliance upon market-based measures to create incentives for vocational education and training institutions to perform better. This increasing reliance on market measures has been a dominant feature of decentralization in both Australia and New Zealand.

Paradoxically, a number of what might be considered, at least at first sight, to be centralizing tendencies, have emerged. The new centralizing measures are not traditional regulatory measures but forms of accountability that generally focus on the outcomes of vocational education and training activity. The development of standards-based vocational education in both Australia and New Zealand, and increased emphasis on quality assurance measures being embodied in training arrangements (see below) are instances of new accountability measures. These accountability measures are typically compatible with a wide variety of different means being used to produce the desired outcomes, so they are (in principle) consistent with decentralization.

The new forms of accountability are broadly consistent with changing management practices in public administration and business, which give more discretion to local managers in resource use, but focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of outcomes. This is also associated with a higher profile for quality issues, which tended to be neglected by older input-focused approaches to management and public administration. These issues will be explored in greater detail in relation to the experiences of New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand described in the sections which follow.

A. Decentralization policies and structural changes in New South Wales

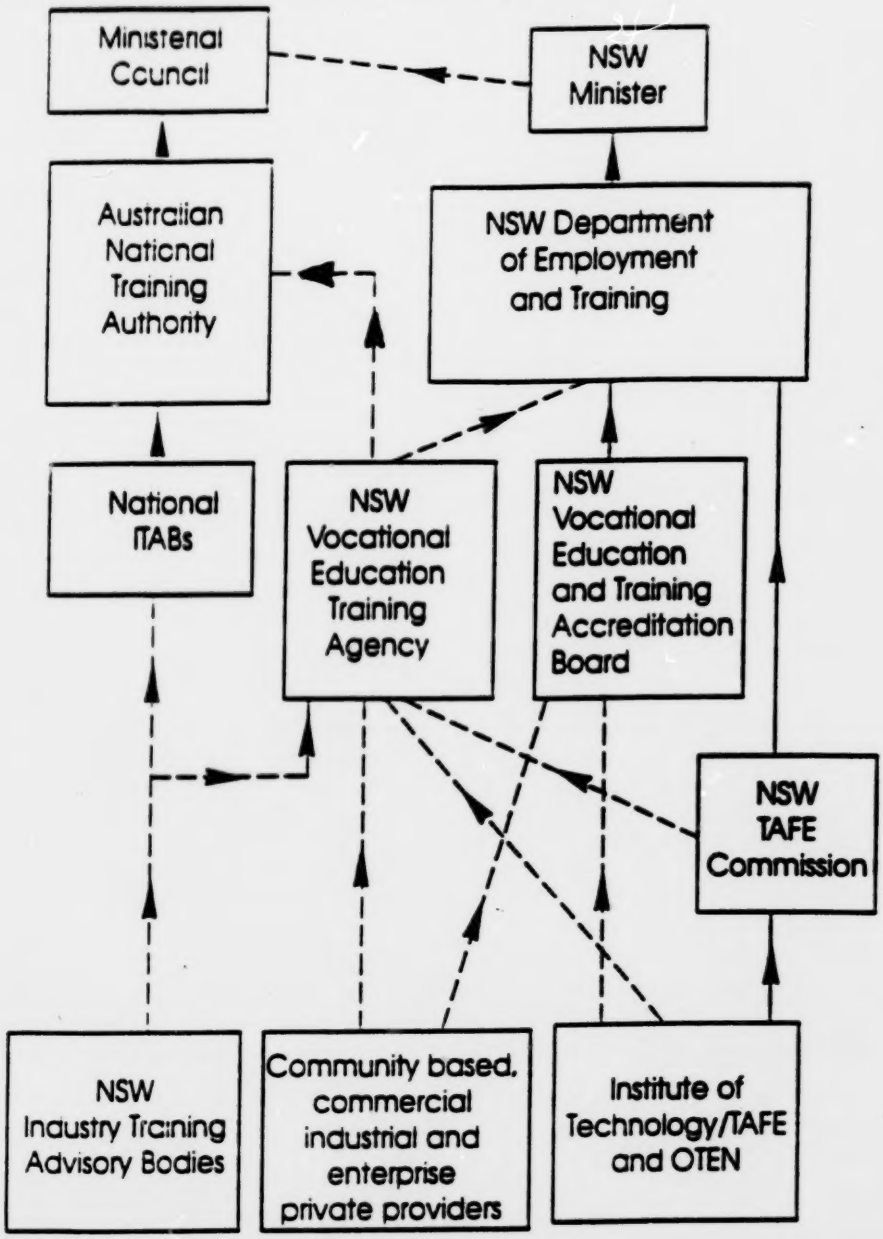
New South Wales had about 76 technical colleges in 1880 and in 1889 a technical education branch was established within the education department, where it remained until a separate department of technical education was created in 1949. That became a TAFE department after the 1974 Kangan report. The department of technical education presided over a relatively centralized system which delivered services on a statewide basis. A 1970s experiment to develop decentralized community colleges in NSW yielded only one institution, Orana Community College, (which is now absorbed within a large Institute of TAFE). An evaluation of Orana Community College in 1989 found it to be an effective vehicle for delivering vocational education services to a diverse set of western NSW communities, including a substantial number of rural Aboriginal groups; however, the model did not flourish in the NSW bureaucratic ethos, (Chapman et al, 1989).

In 1988-90, a management review examined the operations of the TAFE department, and recommended that it be reorganized as a TAFE Commission, with stronger regional networking of the 107 colleges that existed in 1989. It also proposed that NSW TAFE should aim at generating 50 percent of its income through fee-for-service revenues from the private sector, (Scott, 1989, 1990).

Until the Scott report, NSW TAFE was a highly centralized body exercising classic input regulation in relation to most aspects of TAFE college administration, through a variety of different units in the central office.

In 1991 the Scott Review was substantially modified (in ways that were expressly rejected by Scott) by a major rationalization and amalgamation of NSW TAFE colleges into eight Institutes of TAFE and three Institutes of Technology (Sydney, Hunter, Illawarra) in six country and five metropolitan regions, with a further Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) operating throughout the state, (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. NSW's Vocational Education and Training System


Ministerial Council
NSW Minister
Australian National Training Authority
NSW Department of Employment and Training
National ITABs
NSW Vocational Education Training Agency
NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board
NSW TAFE Commission
NSW Industry Training Advisory Bodies
Community based, commercial industrial and enterprise private providers
Institute of Technology/TAFE and OTEN

Furthermore, former central office education and training divisions were devolved to Institutes, to exercise state-wide responsibilities in particular fields from an Institute rather than the Commission's central office. For instance, four of these divisions were devolved to Sydney Institute of Technology. Strategic planning for state-wide activities of the devolved education and training divisions remains a responsibility of central office in the NSW TAFE Commission, but Institute Directors are represented on two central office executive committees, reflecting an effective power shift.

This grouping of colleges into institutes provided a basis for the most significant decentralization of power from the TAFE Commission central office to the new Institutes. The new Institutes have a substantially greater degree of institutional autonomy, reinforced by their size and diversity. The traditional centralized control by central office has been replaced by devolution to Institute Directors. Each of the new Institutes is a formidable organizational structure, which creates greater opportunities for developing priorities within Institutes. Devolution of resources and management responsibility to the Institutes is a key element of this reform, which is equipping the new Institutes to compete more effectively with private vocational education and training providers, capable of more adaptable and market-responsive provision of services.

The development of ANTA's role is also likely to reinforce the NSW Institutes' enhanced flexibility. The NSW TAFE Commission is itself functioning within a new environment with the development in 1993 of a NSW Vocational Education and Training Agency (VETA), which will provide the NSW link with ANTA. In this way, the NSW TAFE commission will be responsible for overall administration of public vocational education and training through TAFE, while VETA will develop state profiles integrating TAFE with private providers, at arms length from the TAFE Commission.

Quality assurance was a particular concern in the reorganization of NSW TAFE and a new central office division was created to develop educational audit measures, based on Australian quality assurance standards, to monitor and maintain the quality of vocational education and training provided by NSW TAFE.

B. Decentralization policies and structural changes in Victoria.

Victorian vocational education and training has always been much more decentralized than that in NSW. In Victoria, some universities offered TAFE programmes and four still do. There was also a tradition of largely autonomous technical colleges associated with the former Victorian Institute of Colleges[1] and the State College of Victoria, existing alongside colleges under the control of the Department of Education.

The former State Training Board of Victoria (STB-V) was established in November 1987 by an Australian Labor Party state government to supervise the provision of vocational education and training from preparatory to technician and quasi-professional levels, through TAFE colleges and private providers, including commercial trainers, industry, enterprises and non-profit community organizations.

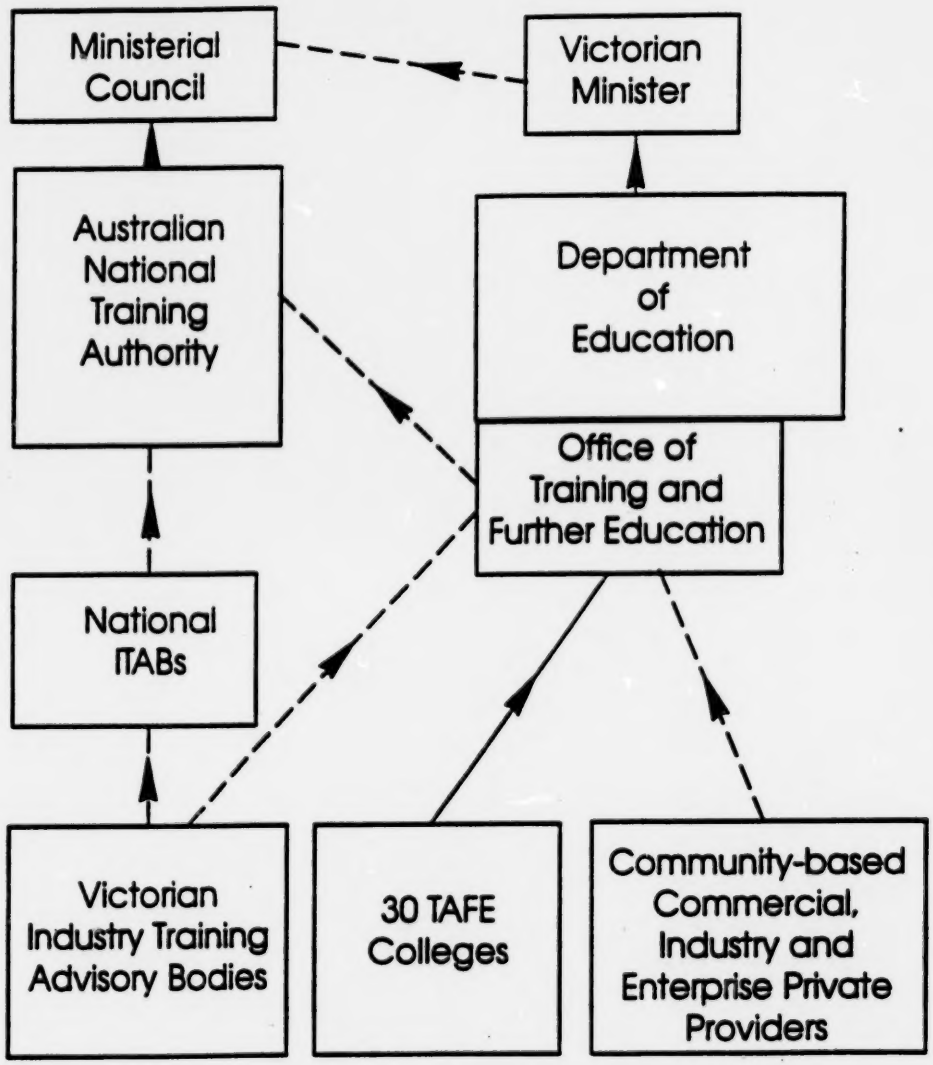
The former State Training Board of Victoria (STB-V) integrated administration of TAFE and supervision of industry training and other private providers within one bureaucratic structure. In most other states and territories, the administration of the public provider is being separated from the overall

1 A body which co-ordinated and safeguarded the interests of a small group of colleagues with a strong autonomous tradition and which operated outside the state TAFE authority.

regulation of vocational education and training, in the interests of a more open training market.

In December 1992, the STB-V was integrated - together with the Office of Adult, Community and Further Education Board - into the Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE), with OTFE becoming a division of the Victorian Department of Education, (see Figure 5). OTFE is responsible for government monitoring of vocational education and training, for obtaining and administering ANTA funding for Victorian TAFE, and for accreditation of courses and registration of providers.

Figure 5. Victoria's Vocational Education and Training System



An area of decentralization in Victoria which provides a good contrast with the former more centralized, division-based approach in NSW, is the development of curricula through "designated providers". Victoria has developed strong networks, led by specific colleges, on particular fields of study. These networks form working parties through which at least some other colleges which deliver courses in that field can contribute on a decentralized basis.

The curricula developed by the "designated provider" for a particular field are made available to all other colleges in Victoria which deliver courses in that field.

The general approach in Victoria is for colleges to manage their affairs within resources provided by OTFE, subject to agreed performance targets against which the college Director reports to OTFE senior management annually.

This approach is given a particular twist in the "negotiated targets strategy". Equity of access is another area in which the STB-V and OTFE have combined local initiative with central accountability on outcomes. One of the great difficulties of disadvantaged clients is the propensity of educational systems to marginalize them. Data collection on the participation rates of disadvantaged clients is typically inadequate. This means that the short-comings of delivery of training to disadvantaged clients can be readily overlooked. The former STB negotiated flexible targets for improved performance in relation to 12 categories of disadvantaged clients, and each college reports each year on its performance against those negotiated targets. This "mainstreams" disadvantaged clients, encourages delivery of labour market training in a form that articulates with other college programmes, and provides improved monitoring data on a system-wide basis. This simple but effective system may have wider application in ensuring equity of access for disadvantaged clients.

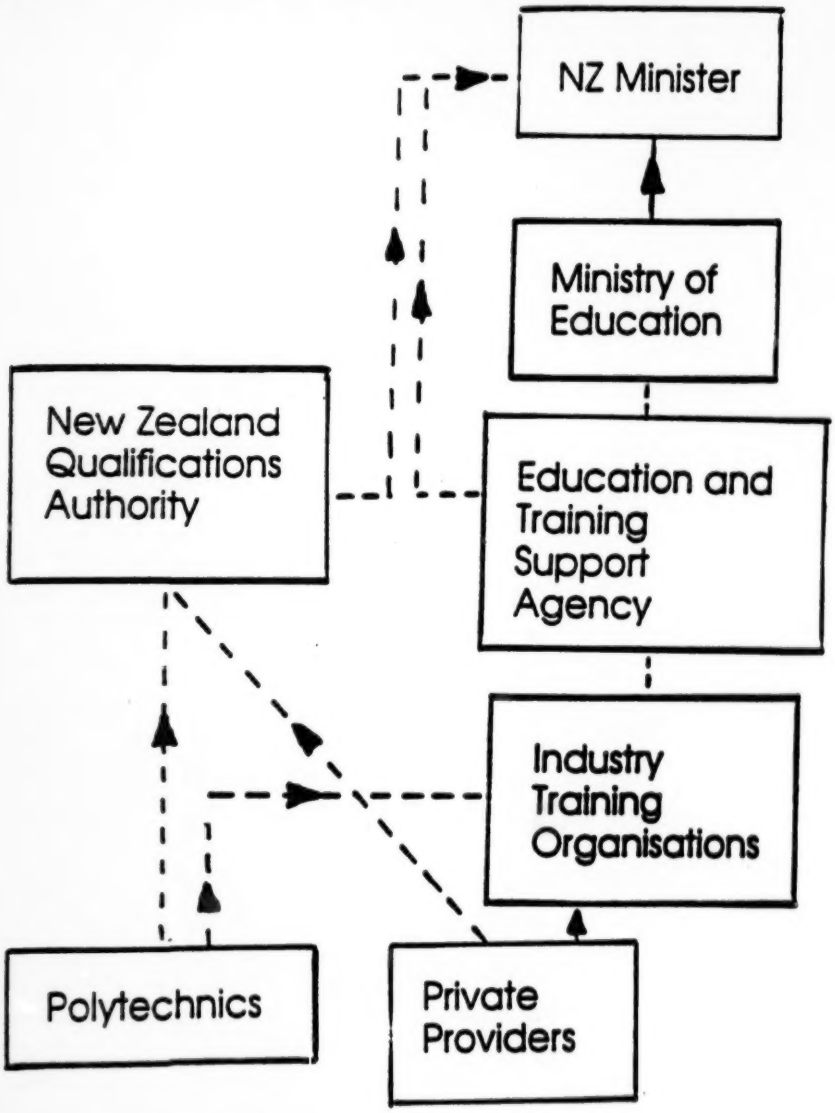
The negotiated targets strategy is an example of decentralization in relation to **means** coupled with central accountability in relation to **outcomes**. It combines wide local discretion regarding means, and adaptability to local circumstances rather than fixed uniform quotas', with a requirement to report performance against agreed criteria. For instance, in some areas additional provision of childcare places may be the most important measure to improve fair access, while in others improved provision of English as a Second Language courses to migrant groups may be the greater local need.

The Employment and Skills Formation Council (ESFC) Carmichael report on *The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System* proposed extension of the Victorian State Training Board's "negotiated targets" policy to all TAFE colleges and institutes in Australia. NCVER is currently undertaking an evaluation of the negotiated targets strategy which will address the appropriateness of national application of that approach.

C. Decentralization policies and structural changes in New Zealand

Compared with the complex mishmash of intergovernmental arrangements in Australia, arrangements in New Zealand seem wonderfully straight-forward. However, it must be acknowledged that the arrangements depicted in Figure 6 are an abstraction from an integrated New Zealand education and training system, not divided structurally into general and vocational elements in the same way as Australia's, although Australia shares with new Zealand a rhetorical commitment to integrating general and vocational education.

Figure 6. New Zealand's Vocational Education and Training System



Acknowledgements: NZ VEETAC Brief, September 1992, Learning for Life: Two.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education provides policy advice and administers funding and related accountability processes for all education and training sectors; school curriculum and administration; and student allowances and student loans schemes. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has developed a national qualifications framework for secondary schools and post-school education and training. NZQA oversees the setting of standards for national qualifications and recognition of overseas qualifications, approves courses of study, accredits education and training providers (other than universities), monitors assessment procedures, and administers some secondary school examinations. The Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA) is an executive agency broadly accountable to the Minster of Education. ETSA administers industry training and labour market training programmes for industry, recognition of Industry Training Organisations (ITOs), and funding of ITOs to develop and manage training programmes for industry.

These include on-the-job training and the purchase by ITOs of associated off-the-job training from Polytechnics and other providers, (VEETAC brief, September 1992).

New Zealanders have not adopted the pretention of a "national training reform agenda" explicitly, but New Zealand has national reform objectives that are similar to each of the five basic elements of the Australian reform agenda.

What Australians call "competency-based training", New Zealanders call "standards based education and training". New Zealand's approach is a more inclusive encouragement of criterion-referenced assessment, not as narrowly defined by vocational competencies as the Australian competency-based training approach, (see Kearns et al, 1993). However, the fundamental similarities in this major process of reform in both countries are more significant than the differences of application. Both countries are moving to require that vocational education and training be delivered to achieve outcomes defined in terms of national standards. In both Australia and New Zealand, this process of reform encompasses both vocational and generic competencies.

The generic competencies, called "key competencies" in Australia are called "essential skills" in New Zealand, (review Table 1). Vocational competencies are defined by industry-based bodies and are ratified by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Vocational and generic standards are being related to the National Qualifications Framework in New Zealand. Assessment is to be criterion referenced, and related to those standards. Successful attainment of the capabilities defined in the standards is to be accorded national recognition. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) encompasses school and post-compulsory vocational education, the registration of providers, accreditation of courses and certification of attainments, except for special arrangements for polytechnics and universities. New Zealand is developing nationally consistent systems of educational awards corresponding to the National Qualifications Framework.

New Zealand has integrated vocational and general education arrangements much more effectively than Australia. There is a conceptual integration and administrative consistency between the New Zealand arrangements that is not evident in Australia. This is partly a function of federalism, which dictates that progress in national policy in Australia must be built up by consensus, which results in bodies like the National Training Board having a much more circumscribed role than that of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. This has adverse effects on overall policy integration.

The development of more open competition between vocational education providers in national markets is national policy in New Zealand as well as in Australia, although substantial institutional distortions in vocational education and training markets persist in both countries. However, the radical change in New Zealand's national economic policies over the past five years under Labour and National governments - away from arbitration-based industrial relations, protectionist industry policies and welfare-state social security and towards rigorous "free market" policies - has been far more pronounced than in Australia, although the recently elected Victorian state government is moving in similar directions.

In New Zealand, reform of certificate-level training builds on an integrated framework for schools and post-compulsory education and training. The Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA) has $NZ22 million as a contestable fund from which ITOs can obtain resources to purchase industry-relevant training from public or private providers of vocational education. The New Zealand government's intention is that these funds should merely be a catalyst for industry to substantially endow ITOs for this purpose. New Zealand's Polytechnic Directors tend to be concerned that this pattern of funding could grow, placing increasing competitive pressure on them.

New Zealand's 25 polytechnics are also under considerable market pressure because of the adoption of the Equivalent Full-Time Student (EFTS) policy. The EFTS policy places public and private providers, and universities and polytechnics in the public sector, into competition with each other to attract per capita funding from the New Zealand government based on enrolments, with a weighting by several pre-determined categories of fields of study.

The EFTS policy has created a framework for market-based incentives, and for greater institutional autonomy, which has been felt acutely by educational administrators in universities and polytechnics. The actual leverage exerted by the newly authorized ITOs is as yet very marginal in substance, but the response from institutions to the expected future development of this role is already producing strong adaptive behaviour of the kind sought by the New Zealand government when it initiated these policies.

V. Comparing New Zealand, NSW and Victoria

The NSW and Victorian systems have been influenced substantially in recent years by the Australian training reform agenda. New Zealand has policy approaches which are broadly similar in thrust and direction. There is close consultation between both countries at ministerial and bureaucratic levels which contributes to the broad similarity of approach. However, there are important differences of detail between the New Zealand and the common features which can be abstracted from Australia's eight state and territory systems. There are also differences of similar degree between NSW and Victoria within Australia.

New Zealand and Australia have different frameworks for standards based education and training. New Zealand, NSW and Victoria require accountability for outcomes in relation to the relevant national framework and standards, as well as to quality assurance criteria, but they increasingly allow significant decentralized flexibility in relation to inputs. NSW and New Zealand were alike in being more centralized than Victoria. Both have changed, New Zealand more rapidly than NSW, with Victoria increasingly leaning in the new direction marked out by New Zealand. NSW exhibits an approach to decentralization that is measured, and arguably more open to directed change in the future than new Zealand or Victoria.

In the sections that follow the paper compares the three jurisdictions in relation to a number of major components of the vocational education and training systems.

A. Curriculum development

The Australian Committee on Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) and other state and territory bodies are proceeding with the development of vocational education curricula in competency-based mode for TAFE and private providers. This will be spread over a period of about five years, as the accreditation of particular programmes becomes due for review. TAFE Colleges have a long way to go before they can be said to have fully converted to a competency based mode of delivery. As well as ACTRAC, TAFE in NSW and Victoria have substantial networking arrangements in place through which to develop curricula. These include Victoria's "designated provider" system, described earlier.

In New Zealand, curriculum development is fully devolved to the institutional level, but - as a consequence - development of curricula is under-resourced compared with Australia.

B. Different structural forms of decentralization

New Zealand, New South Wales and Victoria have three different approaches to the structural forms of decentralization.

New Zealand has a Ministry of Education that funds Polytechnics on the basis of the EFTS scores of enrolled students, and provides additional resources through the Education and Training Support Agency for Industry Training Organizations to purchase industry-relevant training from Polytechnics or private providers as they see fit. These arrangements add to the incentives for Polytechnics to develop their ties with New Zealand industry. New Zealand's Polytechnics operate within a National Qualifications Framework and defined national standards endorsed by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, which places another quality and relevance measure in place. New Zealand operates to maintain quality through a system of registration of providers, with minimal attention to accredita-

tion of courses or development of generally acceptable curricula. Thus very strong emphasis is placed on outcomes rather than inputs.

As they are developed, the national competency standards endorsed by the NTB are made the basis for defining the required outcomes of relevant courses in both NSW and Victoria, in accordance with the memorandum of understanding that underpins the role of the NTB. Within that framework, Victoria has a highly decentralized system in which Colleges operate with substantial autonomy, subject to overall attainment of acceptable Institutes. State-wide education and training divisions remain strong shapers of strategic policy directions, but they are now generally located within Institutes rather than the central office, and the central office committees that direct them have representation from Institute Directors.

C. Funding arrangements

Local authorities have no role in relation to Polytechnics in New Zealand or TAFE Colleges or Institutes in Australia, and that is unlikely to change in either country.

New Zealand's EFTS funding system is a market-based bureaucratic mechanism which creates incentives for Polytechnics to attract students in competition with other vocational education and training providers. Funding for TAFE in Australia is to be coordinated by ANTA and channelled through state and territory bodies to TAFE colleges and institutes using the institutional "profile" as a basis for funding. This is a more conventional bureaucratic funding procedure than new Zealand's EFTS system, but the "profile" system allows for local initiative in strategic planning, subject to broad spectrum approval by central authorities and the state or territory and national (ANTA) levels.

More market-based measures have been considered in the federal policymaking and political arenas. Systems of funding vocational education and training by either tendering or vouchers have been proposed, but not endorsed by government. If they were to be introduced in Australia, this would have the effect of virtual "corporatisation" of TAFE. TAFE would remain state-owned, but would have to compete for voucher or tender funding by attracting student/trainee consumers and by operating on the most commercially viable basis achievable.

Tendering arrangements would maintain a supervisory role for State and Territory TAFE authorities. However, if all capital and recurrent funding were delivered through vouchers paid to students, State and Territory TAFE authorities would diminish significantly in importance. In either case, TAFE Colleges (or consortia of them) would need to operate as quasi-commercial or "corporatised" government business enterprises, or else they would lose market share, ultimately become non-viable and, like unsuccessful businesses, be forced to close.

D. Educational management and the vocational education market

In NSW, Victoria and New Zealand, structural changes associated with decentralization have considerably increased the scope for managerial initiative and autonomy in relation to determining how public providers of vocational education and training function in their operating environments.

Chief executive officers of New Zealand Polytechnics and Australian TAFE Colleges or Institutes have much more power to shape the strategic operation of their institutions because of the development of market-based decentralization policies in both countries. The scope of change has been greater in NSW than New Zealand, and greater in New Zealand than in Victoria, which has had a relatively decentralized structure for considerably longer.

E. Decentralization and market regulation

A "pure" market with price determined balances may not necessarily be appropriate in relation to the provision of educational services, as quality difficulties experienced by both countries in "exporting" educational services have indicated. Rather, there may need to be externally determined regulation of at least minimum quality standards, particularly in relation to criterion-referenced or standards based assessment.

Policies have addressed the development of a more competitive market in a rather piecemeal fashion, using a number of policy instruments that collectively could make only an incremental impact on existing market distortions.

One policy instrument was encouragement from governments for public vocational education providers to become more "entrepreneurial", by competing more vigorously for industry "fee-for-service" customers. This has included the setting of sometimes very ambitious quotas for the future balance of government funding and fee-for-service income. Another instrument was the provision of incentives to enter into joint ventures with private firms in order to acquire additional equipment. A number of vocational education providers already had an established history of success in such operations.

Two possible policy instruments which are being explored are to obtain future recurrent funding through tendering or voucher schemes, either or both of which would have potentially far-reaching impacts in terms of the development of more competition in the Australian training market. Proposals for freer competition between public and private providers have been primarily concerned with improvements in recognition arrangements for private providers (covered by the new National Framework) and suggestions that a (probably gradually growing) share of government recurrent funding for TAFE should be allocated through a tendering process.

This was a key element in the VEETAC paper prepared as an input to the ESFC consultations for the Carmichael report on an *Australian Vocational Certificate Training System*, which greeted the proposal very cautiously because of widespread criticisms in the consultations of tendering arrangements under existing federal labour market programmes. However, the National Board of Employment, Education and Training in *Filling the Need* has recently taken tendering proposals further, suggesting that resources for future growth in tertiary education should be allocated by tendering, on a programme rather than a sectoral basis, to increase opportunities for competition between prospective providers.

A possible future development is that all capital and recurrent outlays for TAFE could be combined into one pool, from which vouchers would be provided to individuals, in the manner which the Australian federal opposition proposed for higher education before the March 1993 election. At that time, the federal coalition parties announced that they would be "applying wherever possible the principle of funding the individual person for their vocational education and training needs, rather than institutions". The coalition saw vouchers as encouraging efficiency, responsiveness, diversity and additional private investment through competition between public and private providers on similar terms, with less bureaucratic regulation. The disadvantaged would be assisted directly.

If the concept of a competitive training market is really to be taken seriously, then consideration will need to be given to market regulation policies. Markets are not necessarily perfectly self-sustaining or self-regulating. Provision for external umpires to intervene from time to time to safeguard the rules of the game for everyone will in due course become necessary in the training market. In that case, the standard should be the preservation of contestable markets, with no significant barriers to market entry of new competitors whenever existing providers are not responding ade-

quately to consumer demand in terms of quantity, quality or variety.

F. Quality assurance

There is no justification for assuming that the operation of a market will necessarily produce optimum outcomes. In any market, outcomes are quite dependent on the information available to consumers to enable them to take informed choices. Competitive market forces will not necessarily produce satisfactory quality outcomes, particularly if there is a competitive incentive to allow standards to deteriorate if necessary in the cause of undercutting competitors on price. Quality can only be a focus of consumer choice if the market has access to relevant and credible information, and then providers compete on quality as well as other factors.

Quality is a public good that almost certainly requires much more attention than it has previously received. Maintenance of minimum quality standards and the labour market relevance of vocational education services can be regulated in a market operating within the framework of defined national competency standards. The role of the national authorities (NTB or NZQA) in promulgating standards which industry-based competency standards bodies have defined as meeting industry needs will be a vital guide to intelligent consumer choice in the context of a market system.

Similarly, adequate arrangements for registration of public and private providers and accreditation of courses, both subject to adequate quality controls, would be no less desirable in a market system than a bureaucratic allocation system. It is probably more important because without such arrangements for quality assurance, consumer choice would be ill-informed about essential attributes of what is being bought from whom.

The future of TAFE Institutes or Colleges in NSW and Victoria and of Polytechnics in New Zealand is likely to turn on them responding to market needs efficiently enough to compete and preferably flourish in an open training market. Nevertheless, there are genuine public goods, such as quality outcomes, equity of access, a balance between training activities and labour market needs, and possible other values, that may need to be protected, and that may be a function that should be vested in an effective central authority.

G. Staff development

The staff training requirements for the delivery and assessment of competency-based training in Australia are being examined through a project funded by the Vocational Education Employment and Training Advisory Committee (VEETAC). A major review committee has been studying staff development needs of TAFE staff, and concrete implementation measures are now being prepared. In the meantime, the deadlines for achievement of substantial changes in Australia's vocational education and training system loom ever closer.

There are good grounds for questioning whether Australia or New Zealand have thus far responded appropriately to the need for staff development if organizational change is to be effective. Staff development has become a low priority in New Zealand Polytechnics in the economic rationalist' environment. Australia has arguably failed to provide adequate training for staff to adapt to the pace of policy driven changes embodied in the "training reform agenda", although significant improvements are now in prospect.

H. Decentralization and the labour market

Decentralization has contributed to responsiveness to the labour market, but only in combination with measures to develop a more open market for vocational education and training services. The latter provide incen-

tives for responsive behaviour, but that responsiveness will not be forthcoming unless local institutions are free to react to the incentives, at least within broad policy parameters.

While some refuse to recognize a distinction between public goods and the aggregation of private goods, there can be a variety of actual or potential conflicts between some public goods and the sum total of private choices. Such conflicts may occur in relation to balancing training outcomes with labour market needs, educational quality and equity of access.

The question of the overall balance of persons being trained in particular disciplines relative to market needs is a very important public good. Are institutions simply to respond to demand for training as it occurs, irrespective of oversupply? If that is a rational response for institutions, is it a realistic approach for governments responsible for the overall operation of the system? The economic importance for any nation of meeting labour market needs through the aggregate outcomes of education and training in the interests of its overall international competitiveness is obvious.

It is also an important consideration for the individuals involved, because the market value of educational attainments will be conditioned by whether a qualification is relevant to the needs of prospective employers. It will also be affected by whether such qualifications are in shortage, balance or oversupply on the labour market at the relevant time. Unless governments simply underwrite community demand through either vouchers or tenders (which is probably unlikely on a consistent basis), some mechanism will be required for balancing the overall mix of provision.

The market value of qualifications also depends in part on recognition of qualifications attained. This also underlines the importance of the arrangements like Australia's National Framework for Recognition of Training.

Unless consumers have access to information they need for informed choice, a market based system will be systematically distorted by the effects of limited information on consumer choice. To minimise such distortions, a market system should be underwritten by arrangements for "feedback" to consumers on relevant characteristics of educational providers, including objective data on the success rates of their former students. Competition may but need not operate to enhance educational quality. Especially where consumer access to information about factors relevant to informed choice is limited, quality of educational provision may suffer in relation to price competition or advertising hype.

VI. Conclusions

In each of the three jurisdictions considered in this study, decentralization of management of inputs into public vocational education and training has been combined with new forms of accountability for outcomes. The appropriateness of the policy mechanisms adopted to the objectives of decentralization is, not surprisingly, somewhat mixed.

What has decentralization achieved? The marked-based incentive mix and the greater degree of local autonomy have encouraged greater exercise of initiative by staff in all three jurisdictions. Overall, market-based decentralization measures have improved the responsiveness of vocational education to industry's needs, and challenged staff with incentives to attract and retain good students. Industry nevertheless remains critical of provision by public vocational education bodies in all three jurisdictions. Without the greater degree of local autonomy afforded by decentralization, the present and future capacity of TAFE and Polytechnics to compete with private providers could become a major problem.

However, outcomes of decentralized market-responsive processes are not necessarily optimum. What are some of the limitations of or on decentralization? Quality assurance is a matter of major importance. It has been a rhetorical theme of much of the reform process, but in practice it was given somewhat uneven attention by policymakers in the three jurisdictions. It is becoming an increasingly important focus of accountability for outcomes. There is also some danger of equity considerations being relegated to a lower priority by market-based decentralization measures, and the Victorian "negotiated targets strategy" illustrates the role for a continuing central authority in this respect.

Systemic and local adaptability are oddly juxtaposed in relation to decentralization. Decentralization increases the scope for local adaptability, by encouraging and empowering local initiative. Decentralization has, however, restrictive effects on adaptability in some circumstances. It can create obstacles to systemic reform, by reducing the capacity of the central authorities to direct major system wide changes to achieve broad social objectives or to institutionalize quality standards. The contrast between the speedy introduction of the Institutes reform in NSW, and the slower progress of changes of this type in Victoria shows this effect. New Zealand has not attempted organized structural changes in the NSW manner, but is relying upon market-based measures such as having industry training organizations mobilize purchasing power to influence off-the-job training provided by Polytechnics. This is a relatively circumscribed method of organizational change.

Before the 1980s, NSW and New Zealand were alike in being more centralized than Victoria. New Zealand has changed more rapidly than NSW, and Victoria is seeking to pursue the rigorous free market approach that New Zealand has been pursuing for the past five years.

NSW's approach to decentralization has been slower in showing tangible results, but the capacity of the NSW system to change structurally would seem to be greater than that of New Zealand or Victoria. NSW TAFE is more open to directed change in the future than New Zealand or Victoria, and the large Institutes in NSW and the Polytechnics in New Zealand have a broader market base than the TAFE Colleges of Victoria. In the long run, the NSW approach may prove the most adaptable.

Annex 1

Notes on Australia's vocational education and training system

The bodies depicted in the organization chart in Figure 1 are described below as an aid to the understanding of the complexity of Australia's federal vocational education and training system or systems. It should be recalled that the system itself is in the process of change and that the final pattern of relationships has yet to be determined.

National bodies

AEC

The Australian Education Council is a forum for Commonwealth, state and territory ministers of education. It was established in 1936, but the Commonwealth only participated after 1972. It meets twice yearly to discuss issues and formulate advice to governments. In recent years it has met several times in joint session with MOVEET.

MOVEET

MOVEET is a Council of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training. the new ANTA is to report to a ministerial council. Relevant ministerial arrangements are to be revised in the final quarter of 1993.

VEETAC

MOVEET has been advised by VEETAC, but that will change with new ministerial arrangements that are to come into effect in the final quarter of 1993. The Vocational Education, Employment and training Advisory Committee (VEETAC) was established in November 1990 by a special ministerial conference. VEETAC had representatives from the Australian Confederation of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). VEETAC met several times a year to advise MOVEET.

VEETAC established several committees (including the Women's Committee, the Australian Committee on Training Curriculum, and the Committee on TAFE and Training Statistics [COTT]) and numerous Working Parties (including Competency-Based Training, Recognition of Training, Research Strategy, Flexible Delivery and TAFE Staffing, among others).

VEETAC is not expected to continue after ANTA becomes fully operation in January 1994.

ANTA

The Australian National Training Authority has been established on an interim basis to implement an agreement which comes into effect on 1 January 1994. ANTA will have a group of five to run the authority and report to the MOVEET/Ministerial Council. ANTA is to achieve national consistency in the delivery of vocational education through the development of agreed 'national goals, objectives and priorities', 'national strategic plans', 'firm targets and priorities', coordinated funding arrangements and 'profiles' for vocational education and training at national level. State and Territory authorities will advise ANTA on State and Territory 'profiles'.

ITABs

Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs) is the 'generic' term for bodies variously called committees, boards and councils in the federal network and the different states and territories. Industry will participate through membership of ANTA and through the ITABs network. National ITABs will

advise ANTA on national 'profiles' and State and Territory ITABs will advise State and Territory authorities on their profiles. These 'key planning instruments' will be considered and adopted by the Commonwealth State and Territory ministers in the Ministerial Council.

NTCC

The National TAFE Chief Executives' Committee (NTCC) is a committee of state and territory TAFE CEOs and a senior representative of DEET. It was previously known as the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors (ACTD).

ACTRAC

The Australian Committee on Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) has developed from the former Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum (ACTC). ACTRAC has a broader more inclusive brief, to develop curriculum for private and industry providers and not just TAFE.

National Training Board (NTB)

The two special ministerial conferences in April 1989 and November 1990 agreed to establish a National Training Board as a company owned jointly by the Commonwealth State and Territories. The NTB promulgates national competency standards which have been developed by approved competency standards bodies (CSBs) which are representative of relevant industry interests.

The NTB is supported by a memorandum of understanding in which all States and Territories agreed to deliver vocational education that is nationally consistent with NTB-approved vocational competency standards. Vocational competency standards are related to the eight-level Australian Standards Framework (ASF), which has been developed by the NTB. Vocational competencies are distinct from, and underpinned by, the generic key areas of competency which were developed by the Mayer Committee (see Table 1).

NCVER

The National Centre for Vocational Research Ltd (NCVER) used to be called the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development Ltd. It was established in 1982 as a company owned jointly by the Commonwealth, States and Territories to undertake research, initially on TAFE but then more inclusively on vocational education, encompassing community and private providers of vocational education and industry training, as well as State and Territory TAFE. The National Centre undertakes and funds research on vocational education, provides a clearing-house service on vocational education research throughout the Asia-Pacific area, and analyses vocational education statistics for the Commonwealth, States and Territories.

RATE

The Register of Awards in Tertiary Education was established in 1990, to take over the role of the former Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA) in relation to TAFE and colleges of advanced education, and to extend its coverage to all tertiary institutions and training providers, whether public or private, which are registered by State and Territory accrediting authorities.

Federal bodies

The Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) was established in 1987 to integrate the constituent elements reflected in its name more effectively than they had been under preceding administrative arrangements.

The National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) was established to advise the federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training, replacing the former Commonwealth Schools Commission, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, and the Australian Research Grants Committee. NBEET has four Councils which report to the Minister through NBEET. They are the Schools Council, Higher Education Council, the Employment and Skills Formation Council (ESFC) and the Australian Research Council (ARC).

State Bodies

Each State and Territory has advisory and administrative bodies which advise and are responsible to the State or Territory Minister or ministers with responsibility for vocational education. these are changing due to the creation of ANTA at the national level. State and territory authorities regulate vocational education and training, administer TAFE institutions, register private providers, accredit courses and certify attainments by students and trainees.

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